[(UPDATED!!)] Best - Denon HEOS 7 Wireless Speaker Review

Product Description of Best - Denon HEOS 7 Wireless Speaker:
Wirelessly Stream Music In Genuine Hi-Fi Quality With the Large HEOS 7 Wireless Speaker: Hear Everything From Internet Radio to Services Such as Pandora, Spotify, iHeartRadio, Rhapsody, and More Five Drivers, Five Dedicated Amplifiers, Dual-Band Wi-Fi, and DSP Processing Guide the HEOS 7 Wireless Speaker and Produce Tremendous Bass, Mammoth Sound, and Lively Dynamics Tailored to liven up even the biggest spaces with room-filling music, the large HEOS 7 wireless speaker makes music come alive in vibrant, full-range, hi-fi sound that features genuinely deep bass and a punchy midrange. Able to stream music from a plethora of sources, including smartphones, tablets, USB sticks, NAS drives, and the entire spectrum of Internet radio and music services such as Spotify, Pandora, Rhapsody, iHeartRadio and TuneIn, HEOS 7 supplies big, open spaces such as open-floor areas, patios, and living rooms with big, clear, loud sound. Because of the superb user interface and simple setup, you'll be listening to music seconds after you remove HEOS 7 from the box. Dual-band Wi-Fi, five drivers, five dedicated amplifiers, two passive radiators, and DSP processing do the rest. You can even add more HEOS components to the system, group them together, and enjoy multi-room sound. Backed by our 60-Day Satisfaction Guarantee! What HEOS Is and How It Works Wireless multi-room sound has finally evolved to meet audiophile standards. Introducing HEOS, a cutting-edge wireless system that fills any room with phenomenal sound from your digital music sources. Bolstered by dual-band 802.11n Wi-Fi for long range and extra bandwidth, HEOS connects to your existing Wi-Fi network and can be placed anywhere. No bridging device or new equipment required. HEOS Means Plenty of Options and Easy User Interface You can choose one of three different-sized standalone speakers; the optional HEOS Extend even expands wireless reach to every part of your home.

Product Details
Amazon Sales Rank: #39412 in Speakers
Color: Black
Brand: Denon
Model: HEOS7
Released on: 2014-08-01
Number of items: 1
Dimensions: 13.50" h x 8.50" w x 22.50" l, 9.90 pounds

Features
Effortlessly fills large rooms with huge sound

Two custom tweeters and two mid-woofers; large subwoofer and two passive radiators; powered by five dedicated Class D amplifiers
Ideal for large rooms and open areas such as living rooms, patios, or open-floor-plan homes
Stream from your favorite music service such as Spotify, Pandora, Rhapsody , TuneIn, iHearRadio or SiriusXM on your free HEOS App for IOS, Android or Kindle
The ultimate in wireless speaker performance

Customer Reviews

Most helpful customer reviews

119 of 128 people found the following review helpful.
DENON HEOS 3 vs. SONOS PLAY 1
By Mathlete
Full disclosure, I am a Sonos user and have fully adopted into their wireless speaker ecosystem. I currently have two Play 5s (Dining Room & Great Room), two Play 3s (Living Room, Guest Bedroom), and a Sonos Home Theater setup in my Media Room (one Sonos Playbar, one Sonos Sub, and two Play 1s).

After hearing all of the pre-release hype about the Denon HEOS Wireless speaker system, I want to compare it to my Sonos system. So I picked two HEOS 3s up this weekend and tried them out.

In my opinion, the Sonos Play system provides a slightly better overall experience and value for the money you spend. However, the Denon HEOS system has a distinct edge over Sonos - not requiring the $99 Denon HEOS Extend Wireless Range Extender just to use the system. News reports have leaked that Sonos is working on a solution to remove the requirement of their $40 SONOS BRIDGE Instant Set-up Solution for SONOS Wireless Network, but until that software/firmware release comes, I can definitely see why the HEOS system will be a serious contender and solid alternative for some households.

MUSIC SOURCES:

Both Sonos and Denon work with the following music service providers:

- Pandora
- Spotify
- Rhapsody
- Tune-In

However, Sonos is able to work with the following additional music services:

- Amazon Cloud Player,
- Google Play Music
- Beats Music
- SiriusXM Internet Radio
- Slacker
- Stitcher SmartRadio
- Songza
- Rdio
- Last.fm
- iHeartRadio

- SoundCloud
- Audible
- and many more lesser known digital music sources

As of the date of this review, Denon has only been able to gain partnerships with Pandora, Spotify, Rhapsody, and
Tune-In. That's nothing to sneeze at, however if you are a subscriber to any other music service, you may want to wait before giving the HEOS system a try. In my opinion, just having access to Google Play Music is a deal maker for me with Sonos. And the ability to control what plays through my Sonos speakers with the native Google Play Music app (versus having to be in the Sonos app) is a serious step in the right direction to satisfy my needs as a customer.

** Point Goes to Sonos **

THE LOOKS:

Cosmetically, the look of the Sonos Play 1 is considerably more traditional versus the HEOS 3. The HEOS 3, measuring 10.7" x 5.1" x 6.5" is taller, sleeker, and stylish than the 6.36" x 4.69" x 4.69" cylindrical Sonos Play 1. However, in my opinion, the Sonos Play 1 has a more solid feel with its metal mesh front plate and and smooth lines with no major edges. It also has a denser feel than the HEOS 3, packing in just over 4lbs of audio hardware in such a small casing.

Depending on your personal style and if you want your speakers to blend in to your room, the winner of the looks category is totally up to you. While I like the minimalist look of the Sonos, the clean edges and sleek design of the Denon is very eye catching. And if you like to have cool lines in design to draw attention to an exceptional piece of audio equipment, the Denon is a clear winner. So for being different by blending elegance with a touch a touch of flash, the winner for this category is Denon.

** Point Goes to Denon **

UNDER THE HOOD:

Both speakers house two class D digital amplifiers pushing a tweeter and mid-woofer that generates a crisp, clean sound for both higher frequency vocals and mid level bass tones. There is no doubt that both Sonos and Denon installed great amplifiers and speakers into their systems as they both generate a solid range for all genres of music - equally.

The HEOS 3 does have a ported designed enclosure, which the Sonos Play 1 does not. I found that the ported enclosure was a nice touch to add a little more depth to the bass, but for certain music tracks played through the device, it seemed the sound was muddier than the Play 1. Nothing horrible, but very noticeable depending on where you have the Play 3 placed in the room.

** Point Goes to Sonos **

THE APP:

Sonos recently changes their app's user interface for iOS, Android, Mac, and PC. This was another big development for Sonos as the old user interface for their controller looked like it was stuck in the early 2000s. And while it still leaves mush to be desired, the Denon HEOS controller app is not much better. It adds features like grouping rooms by dragging widgets together within the app and other functions that seem to be geared towards easier control. However, depending on the phone you are using, pinching and dragging are more cumbersome than tapping to select. Again, this is

not a big issue, but something I found slightly clunky and annoying with my smaller iPhone screen.

Again, this is a personal preference. I like the new Sonos controller app, but can definitely understand why Denon went a different direction. Denon seems more built for a tablet experience, in my opinion as some of the key actions call for pinching, dragging, and precision dropping.

** Sonos & Denon Tie **

THE SETUP:

Both Denon and Sonos are extremely easy to setup and both customer service teams are OUTSTANDING. However, given the fact that Sonos currently requires more steps in their setup process (connect a Sonos Bridge), the point goes to Denon for sure.

During the initial setup of your first Sonos speaker, you must either connect it directly to your network router or purchase a Sonos Bridge, connect the bridge to the router, then wirelessly connect the speaker to the SONOSNet network created by the Sonos Bridge. Did that sound confusing? Well, it may be for the first time user of novice electronics buyer. The really nice people at Sonos customer service had to hold my mother's hand in setting up her first Play 1 and it took almost an hour as she was not familiar or comfortable with making changes to the router the cable company had installed in her home - true story. On the other hand, once you have a bridge set up, adding additional Sonos components is extremely easy.

Denon, on the other hand, has an extremely easy setup from the beginning. Plug the speaker in the wall, download the app, use the supplied cable to connect the speaker's AUX jack into your phone's headphone jack, follow the in-app directions to connect to your network, unplug the speaker from the phone, place the speaker in any room, blast music from the app. Simple!

** Point Goes to Denon **

EXPANDABILITY:

Both the Sonos and Denon systems allow for multiple speakers to be added. Additional speaker may be played independently, paired as a group, or paired as a stereo pair. In my test, I only purchased two HEOS 3s. So, I cannot speak for pairing different size HEOS speakers together.

The biggest advantage regarding expandability goes to Sonos. With a playbar and subwoofer in their arsenal of components, Sonos has a huge advantage for users who also want to bring the wireless music technology to home entertainment. The Sonos Playbar and Sonos Sub can run as a 2.1 home theater or 5.1 home theater system when paired with two Play 1s. And believe me the sound is amazing. So, with Denon only building an ecosystem for music based consumption, I think it leaves room for growth to catch up with Sonos' expandability into home entertainment. Again, this is not a deal breaker for getting into the HEOS ecosystem, but should definitely be considered before going too far down the Denon rabbit hole.

** Point Goes to Sonos **

THE RESULTS:

The Denon HEOS 3 is a great, compact speaker that will definitely bring attention to your home's sound system. It is much easier to setup than Sonos and brandishes a much flashier housing. But the lack of current music services that can be added, clunkiness of the app's user interface, and current limitation to only music systems (not able to expand to home entertainment) at a $299 price

makes me give the HEOS 3, 4 out of 5 stars. I definitely don't think you will be disappointed with the performance or functionality of the HEOS system. I just believe that you can get more for your money with Sonos.

17 of 18 people found the following review helpful.

How do you spell 'awesome'? H E O S S E V E N (and yet, it's a 4-star)
By A. Dent
I suspect that Denon's marketing department would like to see reviews where their product(s) multi-room capabilities are strongly praised and highlighted. And, yes, the HEOS app does appear to have the ability to control several HEOS speakers from your phone or tablet and make them all play the same tune or have them each play separate tunes. I wasn't able to try out such capabilities because I only have on HEOS to play with but, multi-room control or not, I would still be in awe because this Denon baby is an awesome, thundering, crisp and clear, powerful, beautiful 10 lbs. lump of a speaker and this what earns its many stars.

So, let me start with the awesome sound part and back it with some specs, also available at Denon's site, by the way. This 7-driver system comes with 2 tweeters, 2 mid-woofers, 1 subwoofer and 2 passive radiators, all powered by 5 channels of Class D digital amplification. And, by golly, this thing is LOUD. It's tear-shape section makes for an interesting design but it's more than that. I have the HEOS 7 currently placed in my basement office, on a desk next to me, playing Led Zeppelin I as I am writing this review. Which is good. But, thanks to the way it projects sound, I do not need to turn it around and face the treadmill when I go for a little indoor jog because I can hear it almost as well even when I have HEOS' back facing me. And, did I mention 'loud'? It's worth repeating because loud it is. Denon claims that their '7' is suited for large rooms, patios or other outdoor areas and, it's one of the few times when I do agree with 'marketing'. This speaker fills up our 2000 sq. ft. basement and we don't even need to turn the volume all the way up to the max. And... no. I can hardly detect much distortion even when we play it at the loudest.

WHAT YOU NEED OR SHOULD HAVE

When deciding whether such an expensive piece of hardware can work for you, it's helps to be aware of the prerequisites, so here's what you need to make it work:

- WiFi. The HEOS needs access to your home network because it can only be controlled through an Android or iOS app.
- Android or iOS (Apple) device with WiFi capabilities. If your phone can't get to your WiFi network you won't be able to make the HEOS play.
- Subscription to some Internet service. It's not a 'must have' but if you like variety, you should be able to access at least some of the services supported. At this time, the HEOS app supports Pandora, TuneIn, Spotify and Rhapsody.

INSTALLATION AND OPERATION

After all the praise above, some criticism follows but nothing is and nothing will ever be perfect, right? So here's my experience with Denon's.

The ease of initial installation is slightly overstated in my view. I am not computer- or electronics-illiterate but my installation and setup were far from 'quick' or 'smooth'. So here is how it went.

- Manual asks you to download 'HEOS by Denon, an app available for both Android or iOS devices. Done.
- Then, you connect your phone's headphones port to the speaker's AUX port through the audio

cable supplied and wait until lights stop blinking and make sure they don't turn red. No lights turned red so I proceeded to the next step.
- Create a HEOS account. It's mostly providing an email address and a password. Done.
- Establish a WiFi connection for the HEOS, supply password, make sure that both the phone and the HEOS are on the exact same network. Done.
- Log into some Internet service through your pre-existing account or create one. I had a Pandora account so I did that.

At this point nothing happened. The HEOS was as silent as ever and the app didn't see it. I repeat the above a few more times. Still... nothing. I am at the point where I am looking for a customer service number to call. But, before I do that, I take the HEOS down to the basement and decide to give it one more try. This time I use an Android tablet. Go through the steps... the app still sees the speaker but nothing plays. I run the firmware update, I get a failure. I am frustrated so I jump on the treadmill and run for half an hour. Then, I start the app again and... the HEOS plays for me now, It appears that the firmware update was applied successfully.

I am happy. Then, one hour later when I restart the tablet, the app doesn't find my speaker, claims I have none. Reinstall everything, speaker found. Switch from the 2.4 MHz to the 5 MHz network and force my tablet to forget about three WiFi networks in the house that HEOS was not using and, it appears that I have a reliable way to control my speaker now.

My kid's experience, using his own, more recent Android phone was generally flawless, once I explained to it that his phone must be on one specific WiFi network to be able to operate the speaker.

FEATURES AND USER EXPERIENCE

Besides being an awesome speaker, the HEOS turns out to be quite a capable one as well. This is what you can do with it:

- Play off an Internet music service. Pandora, Spotify and Rhapsody are currently supported but Denon promises to add more in the future.
- Listen to the radio. TuneIn carries move 100,000 stations and you don't even need an account to access them. I am planning to get me one so I could save my favorites but I had no problem getting to my local stations or to listing dozens of alternative rock outlets just by navigating through the menus.
- Play anything off your device, phone or tablet.
- Play content of DLNA servers wherever they may be, including NAS devices.
- Play off a USB-connected device.
- Play anything connected through the AUX port.
- Control treble and bass through the simple equalizer interface.

I mentioned in the beginning that you must have WiFi and this is indeed so because you only control the speaker through your Andoid/iOS app but the speaker itself can be wired to the network through the RJ-45 Ethernet port. There are physical volume buttons on the sides, also a headphones port. There is no on-off switch. The HEOS is always on and tends to stay connected for many hours even if you don't use it. My understanding is that if you don't use it for a long, long time, like over a day, it will go to a deep sleep state but my experience was that I could always access it and it was always ready for me.

The main issues I have with HEOS' operation is the requirement that the speaker and its controlling

device are on the same WiFi network. We have a dual-band router and there's a dual-band extender for a total of 4 WiFi networks. Our phones and tablets tend to switch from one network to another as we move around the house or depending on which network is more responsive when they wake up but the HEOS is configured to always be on the same network. Someone please correct me if I am wrong. The only reliable way for me to control it was to practically dedicate an old tablet to serve as our HEOS remote control by limiting the tablet to only one WiFi network, the one that the HEOS is on.

As I noted earlier, I was unable to test the multi-speaker features because I have only one device. Perhaps other reviews discuss these capabilities.

RATING

I am blown away by this speaker's system quality and performance. I would grant it 6 stars if Amazon's allowed it. This combined with the so-so setup experience, the current scarcity of Internet services supported and the awkward way you control and operate the HEOS (same WiFi network always) comes down to a 4 star rating.

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>> Brush your teeth, it's the law!